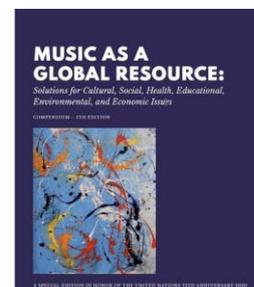


BOOK REVIEW

Music as a global resource: Solutions for cultural, social, health, educational, environmental, and economic issues (5th ed.) (Hesser & Bartleet, Eds.)



Reviewed by Hala Jaber

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Title: Music as global resource: Solution for cultural, social, health, educational, environmental, and economic issues. **Editors:** Barbara Hesser & Brydie-Leigh Bartleet **Publication year:** 2020 **Publisher:** Music as a Global Resource **Pages:** 233 **ISBN:** 978-0-6450322-9-1

REVIEWER BIOGRAPHY

Hala Jaber is a Palestinian community musician. She has recently obtained her PhD Arts Practice (music) at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, UL, where she previously graduated from the MA Community Music programme. Her doctoral research examined community music approaches and informed practice when working with refugees and asylum seekers. She is also interested in understanding self-care practice in community music workshops when working in contexts of trauma. [jaber.hala@gmail.com]

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The compendium “Music as a global resource: Solutions for cultural, social, health, educational, environmental, and economic issues” is a comprehensive document that includes many music programmes and projects from around the world. The layout and arrangement of the compendium make it accessible and easy to follow. There are five main sections in the resource: Music for physical and mental health and well-being; Music for quality education and lifelong learning; Music for social justice and equality; Music for cultural, community and environmental sustainability; and Music for peacebuilding and surviving trauma. Each project indicates a link to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, demonstrating that music-making and artistic projects can explore global issues.

Reading the compendium expanded my awareness of the multiple ways music is being used by various groups around the world to initiate and create change in society. The projects are very rich in their content and they bring forth much positive energy to the communities in which they operate. Engaging with this resource created in me the desire to travel and engage with these projects; a rich experience indeed would await me.

It is clear how the pandemic has affected the workings of the projects; some needed to pause their activities and others moved to online platforms. However, the resilience of the musicians and other project workers was evident in the efforts and drive to find ways to deliver music and be innovative in the use of technology to keep the music-making going.

The resource is easy to read as it is written in a non-academic manner. All the projects presented in the compendium follow a similar layout with a series of subheadings or answering project-specific

questions. This approach ensures that the main information of each project is clearly communicated and that there is a consistency throughout. The contact details of each project are available in the document as well as examples of the work.

I noted that the projects were all driven by the desire to create and work towards a more inclusive and welcoming community. Nevertheless, there were not many projects that collaborated with non-artistic organisations or institutions. The section showcasing environmental issues was the one in which I noted broader collaborations, mainly with scientific and environmental bodies.

The compendium contains projects, some of which are well-developed while others are still in their infancy, from many different countries. It was inspiring to notice that the primary goal and aim for most of the projects, regardless of where they are situated, was quite similar. The goals revolved around connectivity and representation. However, a distinct difference was present in the amount and depth of research and evaluation around the workings of the projects. The projects that were being supported or led by researchers in educational institutions had stronger research and evaluation outputs.

The projects presented in the document highlighted some gaps within the academic literature around community music, music therapy, and music education. I discovered some amazing projects and initiatives that I had not read about previously. This made me realise that the articles and book chapters I can access on this type of work are very limited in comparison to the large number of projects highlighted in the compendium. I would argue that this resource highlights the limitations around academic writings and the gap between practitioners and researchers. I started reflecting on whose work I am reading and why. Publishing in academia is challenging in terms of the rules and regulations that the person submitting an article needs to follow. As a result of this, some practitioners may not feel comfortable in trying to put their work in the academic domain. This made me understand more clearly the importance of documents such as this compendium. I wonder how we can bring forth practitioners' voices and experiences into the academic world, as I believe researchers can learn much from accessing texts such as this.

Reading the compendium made me also think about a societal issue that many projects and individuals across different countries are facing. Being different in our society can mean being silenced, excluded, shunned, and, at times, discriminated against. The concepts of connection, reconnecting with society, finding (and raising) one's voice, and being accepted are themes found in many of the projects. This issue was more prominent in projects that worked with people with physical disabilities and mental difficulties. On reflection, I wonder if there is the scope for a musical programme that targets politicians and other decision makers with the hope that they would then promote positive changes to work towards a more accepting and diverse society.

A development from this publication is perhaps the creation of a world-wide music resource platform. In such an arena, musical projects could contribute experiences, ideas, tips, and advice that may be of use to others working in this way. Additionally, there could be a community where existing and new projects may post an issue they are facing and others may respond with potential solutions and problem-solving strategies they have used to deal with similar issues. This would truly move forward the idea of music as a global resource, the overarching title of this publishing project.

In closing, I would like to share a quote that resonated with me. This quote comes from the Project Chamber Scramble based in Hong Kong: “Music does not change the world, but it does change the people who change the world. Music empowers and emancipates; it strengthens and bonds the community. This is our source of hope in uncertainty” (p. 53).